## Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore General Management Plan/Wilderness Study

## Summary of Public Comments on Draft General Management Plan/Wilderness Study/EIS September 2008

This report briefly summarizes public comment on the *Draft General Management Plan/Wilderness Study/Environmental Impact Statement* for Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore. The draft document was made available for public review beginning April 7, 2008 with the comment period ending on June 15, 2008. Public hearings were held in Honor, Traverse City, and Glen Arbor, Michigan, on June 3, 4, and 5, 2008, respectively, with a total of 196 people attending. The format was identical for each public hearing and included a formal public comment session recorded by a court reporter. A total of 292 comments were received via letters (66), e-mails (60), Web responses (129), and comments transcribed from the public hearings (37). Comments were received from people in 20 different states.

The numerous comments on the *Draft General Management Plan/Wilderness Study/Environmental Impact Statement* were valuable in crafting the final document. The *Final General Management Plan/Wilderness Study/Environmental Impact Statement* will be available to the public in October or November, 2008; it will include a section "Comments on, Changes to, and Responses to Comments on the Draft Plan". Following, is an abbreviated summary of the comments received:

- Of the comments supporting one of the alternatives, there is a great deal of support for the preferred alternative (71%). There is only very modest support for each of the other alternatives: no action (9%), A (8%), B (7%), and C (5%).
- Of the local, state, and federal government agencies that commented on the alternatives, there is a great deal of support for the preferred alternative (80%). There is only modest support for alternative B (20%) and none for the other alternatives.
- There is unanimous support for the preferred alternative from agencies and tribes with whom the National Park Service is required to consult on the draft plan (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians, and the State Historic Preservation Office and Department of Environmental Quality).
- Of the non-governmental organizations that commented on the alternatives, there is a great deal of support for the preferred alternative (73%). There is only modest support for alternatives B and C (18% and 9% respectively) and none for the other two alternatives.
- Regarding the Benzie Corridor, the most support is for the preferred alternative's proposal to
  continue National Park Service (NPS) acquisition of lands within the corridor for a future
  decision on whether to construct a trail and/or a scenic roadway. There is considerably less
  support for discontinuing NPS acquisition within the Benzie Corridor, still less support for
  making a decision at this time to construct a hike/bike trail only, and very little support for
  making a decision at this time to construct a scenic roadway.

- There is a great deal of support for the wilderness proposed in the preferred alternative, moderate support for expanding it, and slightly less support for reducing it.
- There is a great deal of support for the preservation of historic resources.
- Many comments are about park purpose; most of these suggest that cultural resource preservation should be added to the purpose statement.
- Some concern is expressed about whether the M-22/M-109 hike/bike trail might impact private property owners.
- A moderate number of comments express concern about the nature of improvements to Esch Beach parking area.
- Many comments suggest adding equestrian opportunities.
- A moderate number of comments suggest establishing a clothing-optional beach.
- There is moderate support for new bicycling opportunities, including those included in the preferred alternative.